DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 374 816 IR 055 219

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TITLE The Selection, Evaluation and Integration of Culturally Authentic Texts: A Case for Making the On-Line Catalog Reflect Parallel Cultures.
PUB DATE Jul 94
NOTE 17p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Association of School Librarianship (23rd, Pittsburgh, PA, July 1994).
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Access to Information; Authority Control (Information); Book Reviews; *Cataloging; Childrens Libraries; *Childrens Literature; Classification; *Cultural Differences; Elementary Secondary Education; Ethnic Groups; Foreign Language Books; Library Collection Development; *Library Material Selection; *Multicultural Education; Reading Materials; School Libraries; Spanish; Subject Index Terms
IDENTIFIERS *Multicultural Materials

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the process of selecting, evaluating, integrating, and cataloging multicultural texts for school libraries. the first part examines the selection and evaluation of culturally authentic texts. Seven sources for locating multicultural literature and several reviewing sources are listed. The following criteria for evaluating multicultural are identified: accuracy and authenticity; avoidance of stereotypes; and use of language and dialect. Suggestions for integrating culturally diverse literature throughout the curriculum are given: sharing the contributions of other cultures; adding stories from other cultures; and choosing books which transform and mobilize readers. The second part of the paper examines the challenges of cataloging culturally diverse material, especially Spanish language materials. Two areas of cataloging are identified that present problems: (1) routine cataloging and authority control issues; and (2) problems unique to specific physical formats. Specific problems related to subject access are addressed, and a strategy is presented to create a new method for subject assignment to Spanish language materials to ensure access for all patrons. (Contains 9 references.) (JLB)

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THE SELECTION, EVALUATION AND INTEGRATION OF CULTURALLY AUTHENTIC TEXTS: A CASE FOR MAKING THE ON-LINE CATALOG REFLECT PARALLEL CULTURES

A Paper Delivered at the
23rd Annual International Association of School Librarianship
Pittsburgh, PA
July 1994

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Introduction to Part One: The Selection and Evaluation of Culturally Authentic Texts

G. Robert Carlsen (1974) describes five satisfactions which derive from reading and which lead children and young adults to develop into lifetime readers. Lifetime readers are those of us who read because we enjoy reading, because reading is an important part of our lives. If we wish to create lifetime readers in our schools, then, we must provide experiences for students which lead them to these five satisfactions. These satisfactions include reading about people like ourselves, sometimes called reading autobiographically. Until recently, reading autobiographically was nearly impossible for many of our children; they simply could not find characters like themselves in books.

A study of children's books by Larrick (1965) found that less than 1% of the

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5,000 children's books published for a two year period (1962-1964) contained illustrations of African American characters. Less than 7% of all the books even mentioned characters of color. Children's books lacked color and, thus, failed to reflect the diverse population of the classrooms of the time. Other researchers reported similar results (Harris, 1992). The main characters in children's books were largely white and middle class. Literature about the parallel cultures in the United States, multicultural literature, was scarce. Since the 1960's, children's book publishers have made some strides toward representing other cultures in literature. The establishment of the Council on Interracial Books for Children in 1967 and the awarding of the Coretta Scott King Award by the American Library Association beginning in 1969 have each encouraged new writers and artists to enter the field of children's books. The decades of the 1970's and 1980's have brought us such luminaries as Walter Dean Myers, Sharon Bell Mathis, Mildred Taylor, Virginia Driving Hawk Snede, and Ai-Ling Louie.

However, there is still much work to be done to ensure that all children can derive satisfaction from reading autobiographically. Rollock (1984) examined books published for children between 1979 and 1984 and found less than 2% included African American culture and characters; the numbers are even smaller for Asian, Native American, or Latino or Mexican-American cultures. Numbers for YA literature are even lower. Literature from and about parallel cultures in many cases is still difficult to locate.

As teachers and librarians, we are encouraged to use culturally authentic literature and related materials. First, we must locate them. Once such materials are found, though, problems remain. As multiculturalism becomes a component of the curriculum, new difficulties arise as we attempt to select and utilize such books within the school setting. Ensuring that we have the very best in authentic

literature about an array of cultures is no easy task.

A Discussion of Some Issues

Before proceeding further, some further discussion of the term multicultural literature seems essential. Multicultural literature, or culturally authentic literature, may mean different things to different people. Rochman (1993) defines multicultural literature as literature which crosses cultures and crosses borders. She asserts, therefore, that this is not just literature about people of color. Bullard (1991/1992) points out that educators disagree over which groups should be considered part of multicultural studies.

Certainly racial and ethnic groups are a component, but what about groupings based upon region, social class, gender, disabilities, religion, language, or sexual preference? These groupings may be considered part of multicultural literature depending upon whether one defines culture narrowly or broadly. This issue will continue to be one of the sources of debate and disagreement for the next several years. Other issues are also factors which will affect how we select and implement multicultural materials in the schools. For example, can authors from outside a culture write authentically about that culture? What cultures should be represented within the curriculum and the school library collection?

Selection of Multicultural Literature

How to best locate multicultural materials for our schools can be problematic. Due to the interest in multicultural materials, the number of publications in this area has increased over the past five to ten years. Several of the more recent publications include the following seven books.

(1) Kruse, G.M., & Horning, K. T. (1991). ***Multicultural literature for children and young adults.: A selected listing of books ,1980-1990.*** Madison WI: Cooperative Children's Book Center.

(2) Lindgren, M. (1990). ***The multicolored mirror: Cultural substance in literature for children and young adults.***. Fort Atkinson, WI: Highsmith Press.

(3) Schon, I. (1989). ***Books in Spanish for children and young adults, series V: An annotated guide.*** Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press.

(4) Khorana, M. (1991). ***The Indian subcontinent in literature for children and young adults: An annotated bibliography of English-language books.*** New York: Greenwood Press.

(5) Rochman, H. (1993). ***Against borders: Promoting books for a multicultural world.***. Chicago: ALA Books.

(6) Miller-Lachmann, L. (1992). ***Our family, our friends, our world: An annotated guide to significant multicultural books for children and teenagers.*** New Providence, NJ: R.R. Bowker.

(7) Rollock, B. (1992). ***Black authors and illustrators of children's books: A biographical dictionary.*** New York: Garland Publishing.

Of course, the usual sources for reviews of current literature for children and

young adults are also useful in locating materials for the multicultural classroom. *The Horn Book*, for example, regularly features books in Spanish. *School Library Journal*, *Book List*, *VOYA*, and other periodicals review materials which may complement the multicultural curriculum.

We do need to be wary, however, of materials labeled as "multicultural." There are always some unscrupulous people waiting to cash in on the demand for such material. In order to ensure that we select only the best for our students and our schools, we must be prepared to evaluate books on a more individual basis.

Evaluation of Multicultural Literature

First and foremost, multicultural literature must meet the criteria for all good literature. The plot must be interesting and engaging. The characterization should be true to life; characters must live and breathe off the page. The themes should be worthwhile and not overly didactic. An author's style is still an essential ingredient. These general guidelines are an important first step toward evaluating books for the collection. Beyond these general criteria, however, are some more specific to multicultural literature.

Accuracy and Authenticity

Multicultural literature for children must be accurate and authentic in detail. This authenticity must extend from the text to the illustrations in the case of picture books as well. Cultural accuracy, according to Yokota (1993), includes authentic dialogue, accurate portrayal of cultural information (i.e., foods, clothing, customs), as well as adequate treatment of cultural issues. This requirement poses two major dilemmas. The first concerns what is termed "outside" authors. Can someone, the question goes, from outside the culture write authentically about the culture?

The Council on Interracial Books for Children considers this dilemma in its publication entitled "10 Quick Ways to Analyze Children's Books for Racism and Sexism." If an author or illustrator is not a member of the culture, is there anything in his or her background which would suggest some expertise on the culture? This dilemma is a source of very heated discussion in the field of multicultural studies. There are those who suggest that if we carry this argument to its logical conclusion only children should be writing children's books. Others argue just as convincingly that outsiders to the culture have occasionally written quite biased materials with hidden agendas of racism.

This dilemma is not one which will be easily or quickly resolved. Until the debate has been concluded, it is incumbent upon us as professional to select materials which are culturally authentic. The related concern, then, is: can a reviewer from outside the culture adequately assess the cultural authenticity of a text? Once again, we must rely upon the resources at hand in this matter.

Avoidance of Stereotypes

Even in current children's books, cultural stereotypes can exist. All cultures are diverse; to present a person as representative of the culture is a disservice. Are all Asian characters good in school? Are all Native Americans dressed in loincloths? Are all homosexual characters feminine? These stereotypes, present in a contemporary children's book, can eradicate and negate what we hope to accomplish in multicultural education. Not all stereotypes, by the way, are negative. Rochman (1993) points to the noble savage or the martyred saint as stereotypes which may be just as deleterious to the culture.

Use of Language and Dialect

Language and dialect can also be used to stereotype a culture. We must ask if the use of dialect has a purpose, if it rings true. If not, dialect may be deemed as somehow substandard and, therefore, it becomes a negative factor. Rudman (1984) suggests that the cadence of the language as well as the vocabulary used should indicate the linguistic richness of a culture. Not all Texans, for example, use "y'all" and "howdy" as part of their regular repertoire of language. Even within Texas, there are regional differences. Thus language, in this case, would depend to some degree on where the story is set.

Loaded words and sexist language may also be problematic. A loaded word has overtones which might be insulting such as "inscrutable" when referring to Asian characters, "primitive" Native Americans, and the like. Gender specific words also need to be considered. The use of male pronouns to refer to both men and women is one such example.

The preceding criteria are rather broad, but they do serve as a starting point for the evaluation of multicultural literature. Norton's (1991) ***Through the Eyes of a Child*** and other textbooks in the field of children's literature can provide us with more specific criteria by which to assess books.

Integration into the Curriculum

We must begin to move away from what we might label the "February" mentality. For years, we included books by and about African Americans in the curriculum; however, this generally occurred only during February, Black history month. To feature the works of different cultures only during "awareness" times will do little to achieve the goals of multicultural education. In order to celebrate the many parallel cultures within our schools and communities, we must make

every effort to integrate multicultural materials throughout the curriculum. The following are but a few suggestions to make this task a bit less daunting.

Sharing the Contributions of Other Cultures

Too often our textbooks are slow in documenting the contributions of women and people of color to history or science or some other filed of study. By incorporating biographies into these curricular areas, we can ameliorate the shortcomings of the text as well as highlighting people from a vast array of cultures at the same time. There are several series of biographies which feature Hispanics and African Americans of achievement, other series highlight the contributions of gays and lesbians, while yet another documents the contributions of people with disabilities.

Adding Stories from other Cultures

There are over 1500 variants of the Cinderella story. These stories come from a multitude of cultures, cultures as diverse as French, Algonquin (Native American), Chinese, Korean, Creole, and many others. This presents a very simple approach to including literature from other cultures. By sharing with children different versions of a familiar folk tale such as Cinderella or Little Red Riding Hood or Beauty and the Beast, we come naturally to a discussion of the things which cultures have in common as well as some unique features of a particular culture. As students compare the variants, they will learn a little about the culture of origin. Having students read several folk tales from one culture may provide even more information about that culture.

Books Which Transform and Mobilize Readers

It is important to eradicate some of the stereotypes and misinformation and downright propaganda which has been relayed in past children's books. Utilizing books from Japan, for example, which describe the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki can provide readers with a very different perspective that that contained in a typical history book. The stories of the mass destruction of people and animals and towns does more than inform. Perhaps they will also persuade readers to be more socially conscious.

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I. The Cataloging Challenge: Introduction

Building and maintaining the media center's bibliographic database is an on-going challenge for the school librarian. The challenges can be categorically divided into two substantive types: (1) routine cataloging and authority control issues and (2) problems unique to specific physical formats or generic categories of materials. Resources intended for use in parallel instructional environments or written predominently in a language other than English can be appropriately included into the latter category.

Descriptive cataloging and classification in the school library should provide effective and efficient access to the collection. The media specialist strives to build a balanced collection of educational resources to support the curriculum as well as recreational materials for students to read for pleasure. The mandate to provide rapid, accurate and comprehensive access to locally available materials is not library-type specific: the theoretical framework, cataloging codes, classification schemes, standardized subject heading taxonomies, and international bibliographic standards do not vary from one type of library to another. However, locally determined requirements and descriptive cataloging conventions reflect unique differences in access requirements and user needs.

Traditionally, materials for youth written in a language other than English present significant cataloging problems. An artificial division between materials for particular grade level does not necessarily resolve these cataloging issues, but, rather complicates and magnifies them. The media specialist cannot assume that a different interpretation and application of cataloging rules and practices solely based on the language in which the material is written will provide specific or sufficient access to them.

Despite our best intentions and efforts in the cataloging process, students will not predictably achieve a high level of satisfaction without assistance. Potential solutions to this dilemma range from continued use of standard tools and hope that users will conform to the integrated system to rejection of the standardized approach accompanied by a requirement to devise an organizations-specific scheme based on instructional department and hierarchy of curriculum content. The choice is ours; we are forced by circumstances to decide.

A consensual decision is needed to reflect the school's situation alone. The collective decision can specify a classification system, descriptive cataloging standards and practices, and a taxonomy for the library system. Hardware

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requirements will follow and form the basis for district-wide networking. When we reach agreement, we can begin to implement a course of action.

Unfortunately for the intended users, librarians have directed their foreign language cataloging efforts to the resolution of technical problems. These difficulties include "letter of the law/rule" situations.

II. Background and Need

To provide efficient and thorough research, reference, database searching, and document delivery to their colleagues the media center staff will need to use current materials and state-of-the-art technologies. These services will augment and enhance current activities, thus increasing the reliability of timely information gathering, decreasing the duplicity of resources required and contributing to the organization's collective productivity.

The role of the media center is to support the curriculum by providing materials that enhance, extend, and support the curriculum. The goals and objectives of the campus, the scope of the curriculum, the teaching patterns in the school and student needs shape the media center program. Media center staff evaluate and select materials in a variety of physical formats in order to assemble a basic, core collection of materials.

All of the items in the central collection will be shelved by author to maximize ease of retrievability and organization. Items will be kept together by physical format (book, video, cassette, kits, and the like).

Resources may be available in more than one format. In order to retrieve all pertinent and relevant materials for a topic or by a specific author, the media center will rely on a catalog. As planning activities become implementation plans and financial resources become available, media centers migrate from paper card catalogs to integrated online catalogs. Resources will be readily identified in a single database.

Building the database requires significant time and effort. The problems inherent in handling culturally diverse and Spanish-language materials transcend the physical form of the catalog.

Each item in the collection is added to the database. Identifying information provided the author(s), title, subtitle (when existant), place of publication, publisher, date of publication, and series (if appropriate). When the data are present on the item, the International Standard Book Number

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(ISBN), Library of Congress card number, and Library of Congress classification number also appear in the record.

Subject access is of paramount importance to students, teachers, and media center staff. The assignment of subject headings falls within the discretion of the cataloger. Each item provides content analysis data through the preface, introduction, chapter headings, dust jacket, and promotional publishers' information. To assure consistency in the selection of subject terms, a thesaurus is selected which contains both general terms and appropriate, specific terms. When working with culturally diverse and Spanish-language materials, no single list exists which meets these requirements and also serves as the official taxonomy for the databases most frequently querried by the media center staff.

We must discard the practice of using standard tools in isolation. We must do cataloging differently, shifting the focus from a micro to a macro level. Subject access should coincide with the terms used in the classrooms and studios. Textbook descriptions of concepts, techniques, periods of history, and prominent personalities should coincide with those found in the catalog. To solve the dilemma of subject authorities which do not satisfy these requirements, we need to adopt a standardized list of subject headings and add appropriate terms from the standard textbooks and units of instruction found within the curriculum. Newer, additional terms can be recorded as classroom teachers and media specialists identify them.

Knight identified these technical dilemmas in her 1987 review. She described six problem areas: (a) establishing edition and publication dates; (b) lacking International Standard Book Numbers (ISBNs); (c) establishing names and responsibilities for authors and illustrators; (d) series; (e) choice of points of access; and, (f) subject headings. Catalogers recognized and addressed the problems; she predicted timely resolution and recommendations for improved ease of handling.

During the database building process, catalogers have identified several problems/limitations associated with culturally diverse and Spanish-languge materials. Identified areas of concern include the following:

a. non-existant terms - subject matter identified in the items for which no specific, appropriate term could be found.

b. broad terms - subject matter clearly more specific than the general, broad term found in the thesaurus.

c. ambiguous terms - subject matter clearly more specific than the nebulous, general terms which can be confusing or misleading.

III. Problems encountered regarding subject assignment

Pre-cataloging examination of the specific items comprising special collections reaffirmed the problems previously identified with regard to subject assignment and accessibility. Potential problems can be addresses by following two distinct strategies.

First, instructional staff for the specific areas should be invited to participate in the media center project committee to improve access to culturally diverse materials. Items would be added individually to the media center database as access and retrieval decisions are reached. Each item can change from its current physical location dependent on the discretion of the committee.

The subject access problems can be addressed through discussion with media center staff and individual, concurrent examination of terms used in instructional units. Subject terms which are deemed incorrect or inappropriate by the committee should be deleted from the official thesaurus. Additional terms should be added. This process may be tested with a select number of materials to determine the complexity of the problems and to ascertain the steps in the decision-making and alignment processes.

Second, media center staff may identify broad curriculum areas as too comprehensive for the general terms included on the official list of descriptions. Additional specific subject headings with a hierarchy of cross references are essential to achieve the optimal degree of specificity.

To construct a list of additional subject terms for broad curriculum areas may fall outside of the expertise of the media center staff. A team effort involving subject specialists and the media center staff combines the curricular area and database building expertise required to achieve an acceptable resolution to the problem.

Media center staff recognize the problems inherent in adopting and using a thesaurus containing broad, limiting terms. However, the standard subject headings tools do not suggest a specific method for the augmentation and enhancement of an existant thesaurus. The situation is further complicated by the potential for media specialists to purchase cataloging (either paper catalog cards or machine readable records) from commercial vendors which use databases to assign subject terms.

The broadly defined subject terms present a potential maintenance problem. The mapping from one term to another may provide a theoretical resolution; however, the required resources to maintain the integrity of the database and subject list may exceed those available. The availability of the complete subject list with terms mapped appropriately would require frequent updating and distribution and real-time access by the media center staff and curriculum committee members.

V. Proposed course of action

Considered singlely and collectively, these important and noteworthy efforts provide a foundation for further work. Each effort presupposes that through the sharing of information, a resolution to the problems encountered will emerge. However, database building efforts in related environments found in public schools, public libraries, and other educational institutions in the process of building and maintaining culturally diverse collections suggest that the problems are not unique to media centers.

The comprehensive cataloging of materials for youth requires a concise summary of the item. Traditionally, when describing Spanish-language materials, the cataloger wrote the summary in English, thus alleviating the librarian's need to be fluent in Spanish. However, in those media centers serving student populations with a significant percentage of children from Spanish-language dominant homes or recent immigrants (students transferring from a Latin American educational system and present in the district less than two academic years), this approach can be seen as a disadvantage. For primarily Spanish-literate consumers choosing reading material for themselves of their children, descriptive cataloging in English may be not have optimal value.

Subject headings used to catalog materials for youth are also primarily in English. One provision in the Library of Congress Subject Headings for Children's Literature is: "Spanish language materials," a heading to be used for basic children's reading materials in Spanish. "Spanish language materials -- Bilingual" may be used when the item is in Spanish and another language. Also, a source is available to aid in establishing Spanish-language headings if desired. The Library of Congress has approved the use of Spanish-language subject headings from Bilindex: A Bilingual Spanish-English Subject Headings List: Spanish Equivalents to Libary of Congress Subject Headings. This book includes a section on "Library of Congress Subject Headings for Children's Literature with Spanish Equivalents."

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This work also provides some guidance on name authority work. Bilindex is aimed at the English-speaking cataloguer of Spanish-language materials. While the taxonomy is a valuable tool for a group of catalogers, the approach of translating addresses the "letter of the law" (or more precisely "letter of the code") and ignores the "spirit of the code."

First, Spanish-speaking children learn their first language before they enter kindergarten. Words related to the home, clothing, and children may be contemporary derivatives of Latin American and indigenous languages from maternal ancestors (Nahuatl, Quechua, Tupi-Guarani, Arahuaco-Caribe, Maya). These indigenous words may reflect the geographic area in which the children live.

Second, materials readily available for English-speaking children do not necessarily exist in a Spanish-language version. Copying the English language cataloging in a Spanish translation does not solve the cataloging problem. However, one cannot help but agree that the direct translation approach resolves the practical problem of cataloging materials.

Balanced collection development policies may not be reasonable to achieve with Spanish-language materials. Because machine readable bibliographic data and review information are not available to the extent of English-language materials, the media specialist must develop cataloging guidelines to address current and future access and retrieval requirements.

Successful implementation teaches valuable lessons. Those lessons are as follows:

1. Library automation is first and foremost for the user community. Access exceeds correctness.

2. Customization of library automation can be achieved while preserving the integrity of national standards.

3. Library automation is a school-wide effort. Classroom teachers and educators must participate in the process, thereby contributing to its success.

4. Planning is essential, but on-going, parallel activities require support.

To avoid a time-consuming, mapping, or realignment project, and recognizing the problems inherent with the unilateral adoption of a thesaurus we suggest the following strategy:

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a. to enlist a cadre of classroom teachers, curriculum developers, and educators to review the composite list of subject headings and make recommendations for modifications and enhancements;

b. to field test the final draft of the subject terms list with classroom teachers, curriculum developers, and educators;

c. to modify the final draft of the subject terms based on the field test;

d. to share the results of the field test with the cadre of classroom teachers, curriculum developers, and educators; and,

e. to publish a guide for accessing culturally diverse and Spanish-language materials using the subject terms from the composite list.

V. Summary.

Rapid changes in technology used not only in library automation but curricular areas as well will continue without relief. The demand to keep current as we prepare our students to work in the twenty-first century propels us unrelentlessly toward technologies we do not necessarily want to accept on manufacturers' timetables. Technological advancements will likely continue to force us to upgrade, enhance, and replace more rapidly than we prefer. However, the first automation efforts admittedly prove to be the largest.

The flexibility created by adherence to standards, the applications of good systems procedures such as planning, and the willingness to never accept the status quo, permit us to do more with less while even enjoying the experience. Without these components automation produces little more than frustration, unhappiness, and inefficiency. The opportunity to develop a local, affordable automation effort provides an opportunity well worth taking.

The "spirit of the code" deals with the moral, ethical, and cultural aspects of Spanish-language materials cataloging and can be applied to youth and adult collections. Several aspects merit timely and thoughtful consideration by the cataloger.